

Camden County Planning Board
Minutes
May 19, 2010, 7:00pm
 Historic Courtroom
 Camden County Courthouse Complex

Members Present:	Absent:
Chairman Rodney Needham	Ray Albertson
Vice Chairman Calvin Leary	
Fletcher Harris	
David W. Bundy	
Michael Etheridge	
John Aydlett	

Call to Order & Welcome

Chairman Rodney Needham called to order the May 19, 2010 meeting at 7:00 PM.

Others Present at Meeting

STAFF PRESENT

Name:	Title:
Dan Porter	Director of Planning
Dave Parks	Permit Officer/Flood Administrator
Amy Barnett	Planning Clerk/Clerk to the Board

OTHERS PRESENT

Name/Residence:	Title:	Purpose / Representing:	Meeting Section:
None			

Consideration of Agenda

Chairman Rodney Needham called for consideration of the agenda.

Motion to Approve the agenda as written was made by: Michael Etheridge.

Motion Seconded by: John Aydlett.

The motion was approved with Chairman Rodney Needham, Vice Chairman Calvin Leary, Members Fletcher Harris, David W. Bundy, Michael Etheridge, and John Aydlett, voting aye; none voting no; 1 absent; none not voting.

Consideration of the Minutes - April 21, 2010

Chairman Rodney Needham called for consideration of the minutes from the April 21, 2010 meeting.

Motion to Approve As Written made by: Vice Chairman Calvin Leary.

Motion Seconded by: Michael Etheridge.

The motion was approved with Chairman Rodney Needham, Vice Chairman Calvin Leary, Members Fletcher Harris, David W. Bundy, Michael Etheridge, and John Aydlett, voting aye; none voting no; 1 absent; none not voting.

Comments from the Public

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Item #1, Sign Regulations - Discussion

Dan Porter made a brief introduction to the sign regulations. He went over a few of the details included in the current sign ordinance.

Mr. Porter commented that the commissioners do not want any sign ordinance language to be brought to the board until after the general elections (after January 1, 2011).

At this time, Mr. Porter showed a Power Point slide show of signs throughout the region. Below is a listing of the signs that were pictured in the slide show:

1. CVS
2. Sonic - smaller signs - landscaping
3. ECSU Viking Village
4. Strip Mall with many businesses on it
5. Window Signs where you can't see what is inside the business
6. Currituck Billboards (Currituck Ordinance prohibits billboards, current existing billboards in Currituck are probably legal non-conforming uses) - Camden's Ordinance is that you can't have more than 1 billboard within 500 feet of each other
7. Mildred's Florist Sign - with other signs included in her signs - looks tacky - advertising the people who do her landscaping
8. Fast Food Signs - Royal Wok
9. Signs on Buildings - Express Lube

10. Pole Sign - Colony Tire - Looks bad... possibly too high, height a possible issue
 - a. Halstead Overlay limits a lot of things, might want to look at the overlay to see what kind of ideas to use in Camden's Ordinance
11. Layered business signs with landscaping
 - a. John Aydlett asked if the County can dictate what the signs can be made of. Dan Porter answered that yes it can dictate what they are made of, but not the content of what is on the sign because that would get into the 1st amendment rights of the business owner.
12. Couple of businesses with Letter Signs over by Sissy's Subs
 - a. Fletcher Harris asked about Portable Signs - He said that they work well, but they are ugly. Dan Porter responded that Portable Signs meet a specific need and work well in advertising community meetings and are really effective advertising overall. Mr. Harris' opinion is that it looks tacky when half the letters are falling off and not kept straight on a portable sign. Mr. Porter agrees with this assessment, and that owners of portable signs need to keep their lettering straight and as secure as possible to guard against having to purchase additional letter sets for their signs.
13. River's Edge Mini Storage Sign
14. Bank of Currituck - Good quality sign
15. Dusty Attic - Add on signs
16. Gas Stations - Signs all over the place - Cigarette, soda, gas prices, etc.
17. Camden Square Strip Mall with portable signs (where Sissy's Subs is located)
18. River Bridge Apartments - Flags ok for temporary use like grand openings, question is how long to allow them to stay up.
19. River Bridge Apartment Entry Sign - good quality sign
20. Window signs - again, not attractive, presents security problem, can not see inside building from outside.
21. Camden Medical Park
22. Camden Intermediate School - Good Sign, needs some landscaping
23. Grandy Primary School - Good Sign, has good landscaping
24. Camden Business Park
25. Randy Brown Motor Sports - Coast to Coast; a little bit close (cluttered?), but ok.

Dan Porter said that he wants to bring in an expert, people who make signs for a living, to speak with the Planning Board about how signs are made and safety issues with regard to visibility from the road. He went on to say that he had read several articles that went into the philosophy of signs, what factors are effective, how far off the road they should be, design criteria, safety issues, etc. Vice Chairman Calvin Leary agreed that this is a good idea and commented that he himself did not know much about signs [outside of what is in Camden's ordinances].

John Aydlett asked if lighting would be part of the sign ordinance. Dan Porter responded that typically with sign ordinances you would regulations prohibiting lighting in some areas but you basically allow up lighting and down lighting but you can not have spill over into the driving space because there can be glare and it can cause problems, and they have to be such that they do not shine on to the street.

Dan Porter mentioned another type of sign, a vehicular sign. A vehicle painted on all sides with advertising content, is then parked in a location where it can be seen by the highest amount of traffic. One issue with this is that it is not a permanent sign, no permit can be issued for this since it is on a vehicle.

Mr. Porter mentioned that on one of his many trips, traveling down I-40, he saw a few high definition digital billboards. With the way technology is going, the county's ordinances may want to address this type of sign as well.

Chairman Rodney Needham mentioned seasonal signs such as you would see at Christmas, Easter, etc. He asked if there should be size restrictions, or constraints such as whether or not these should be only temporary or not, placement constraints, etc. Dan Porter answered saying that Currituck County has done a good job with their seasonal sign ordinances (part of the board packet for the May meeting). Currituck allows a 100 sq ft sign at the row if it is not more than 10 ft across. If it is more than 10 ft tall and more than 10 ft off the row you can have up to 200 sq ft sign. So the distance in height is relative to how large the signage you can have. Talking about roadside market signs, which are seasonal signs, they can be placed 30 days before the market opens and must be removed within 30 days after the market closes.

Vice Chairman Calvin Leary asked what kind of regulations should be placed on yard sale signs. Dan Porter answered saying that yard sale signs are allowed to be put up 3 days before the sale and must be taken down immediately afterward. It is prohibited for them to be placed on utility poles, or traffic poles otherwise you would see a lot of staples in the poles. What is seen a lot here in Camden are temporary signs advertising things like Shriner's Club fund raising events and so forth. Where this type of signage is concerned, it is hard to say "no you can't put this sign up", and so the county needs to be able to accommodate this type of signage.

Mr. Porter went on to say that signage that seems offensive in the way it looks is the kind of signs which look like election signs but advertise a business, are on stakes, and are located in the NCDOT right of way. The problem with this is that since they are in the NCDOT right of way, the county can not enforce any sign ordinance there because the NCDOT has their own ordinance, if they would enforce it.

Chairman Rodney Needham asked what would need to be done when a person applies to put up a sign, with regard to the allowable materials and so forth. Dan Porter answered saying that specific standards would need to be addressed at the time of permitting depending on the then current ordinances in place.

Dave Parks asked the Planning Board if they wanted staff to prepare something to go into the Table of Permissible Uses to address "Farm Markets" and the appropriate applicable signage. Dan Porter said that he could draft something to bring back to the Planning Board.

Mr. Porter then reminded the board of his earlier suggestion of bringing an expert on signage to the next meeting. Dave Parks suggested bringing a couple of business owners as well to get their input.

Fletcher Harris asked about banner signs. He mentioned that banners can sometimes get ragged if left up for too long. Mr. Porter said that banner signs are addressed in the Currituck Ordinance as well, and for the Planning Board to refer to that as a way to get an idea for how to plan for the Camden sign ordinance.

Information from Board and Staff

- Preliminary Plat for Lakes of Shiloh was approved.
 - Lakes of Shiloh and School System to sit down and decide how to build the bus shelter and what the \$5500.00 is building and then require the school system to send the county a letter stating that they have complied and done what they have promised.

Consider Date of Next Meeting – June 16, 2010

Adjournment

At 7:55 PM, John Aydlett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. David Bundy seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Chairman Rodney Needham, Vice Chairman Calvin Leary, Members Fletcher Harris, David W. Bundy, Michael Etheridge, and John Aydlett, voting aye; none voting no; 1 absent; none not voting.

Date: _____

Approved: _____
Chairman Rodney Needham

Attested: _____
Amy Barnett, Planning Clerk